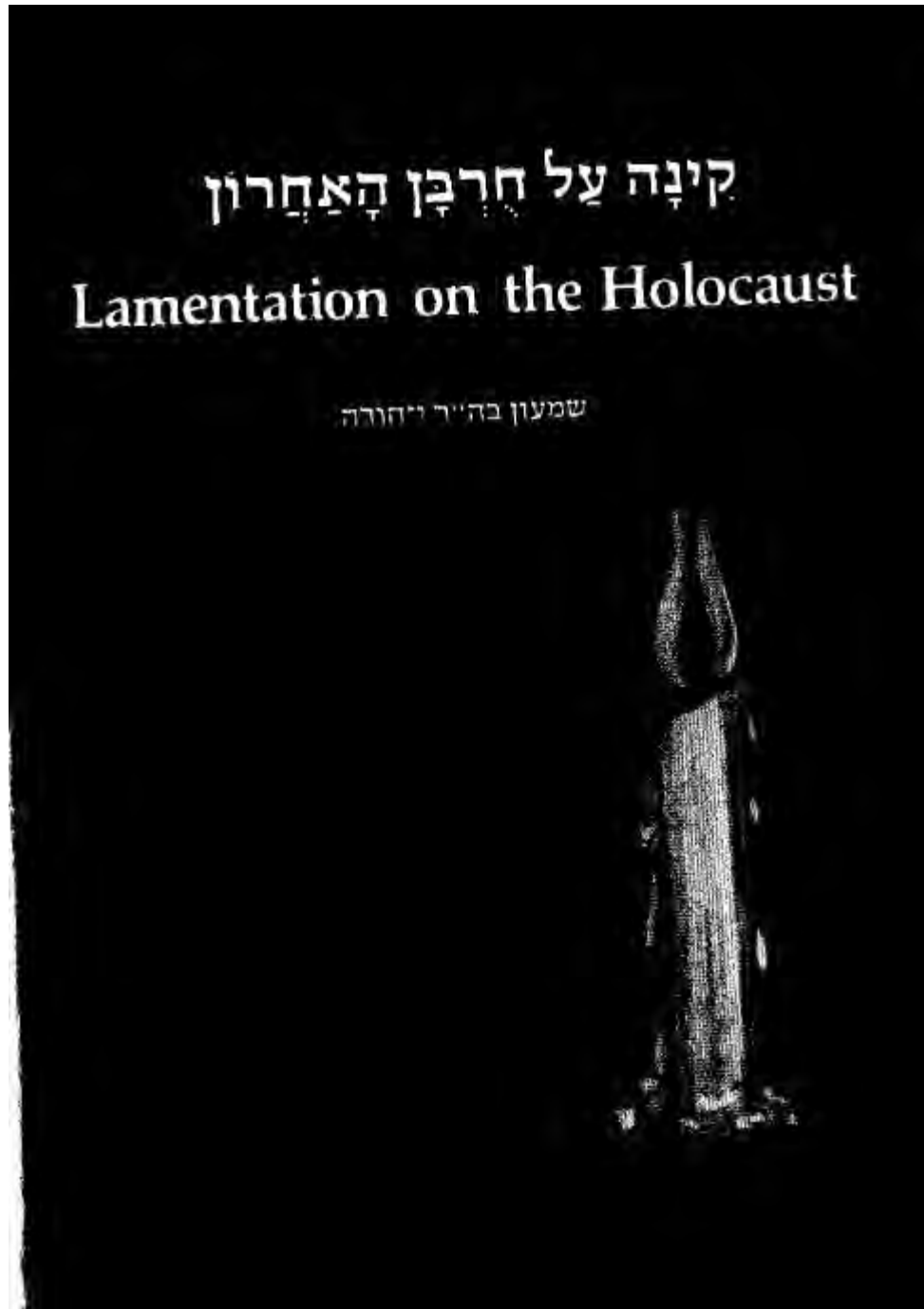


Lamentation on the Holocaust  
set to *Eicha* trope melodies  
by Len Fellman



The book:

The Uncouquerable Spirit:  
Vignettes of the Jewish Religious Spirit the Nazis Could Not Destroy  
by Simon Zuker, translated by Gertrude Hirschler

besides being one of the greatest testimonies to Jewish faith that I have every read, contains a most remarkable lamentation on the Holocaust. What makes it so remarkable is that on the one hand it captures a great deal of the horror of the times in word and image, but on the other hand it is full of love and faith in God. It ends with words so full of hope and confidence in the ultimate redemption of the Jewish people, that just to read these words has—for me—a healing effect.

Some years ago, I thought it would be worthwhile to set this lament to the music of the *Eichah* (Book of Lamentations) trope melodies. For the purpose I used the system of *Eichah* tropes given in Joshua R. Jacobson's *Chanting the Hebrew Bible*. This system, besides providing the familiar, plaintive melodies for chapters 1, 2, 4, and 5 of *Eichah*, introduces a rather relentless, driving melody for *Eichah* chapter 3.

I chose to mix these various melodies in a rather haphazard order, as a means of letting the individual melodies express what I felt to be the feeling of each section of the piece. I believe the result is a profound link between *Yom haShoah* and *Tisha B'Av*,

### FILES WITH EMBEDDED RECORDINGS

I have provided two versions of this lament with recordings embedded in the file:

One gives the text with trope symbols to give a guide to the melody to be sung to each phrase (as shown in Jacobson's "Summary of the *te'amim*"). For the "*Eicha* chapter 3" melodies, I uses arrows to indicate the flow of the melody.

Click on a "speaker" icon to hear the recording of each section of the text.

The other version gives a scan of Zuker's pages (they contain disturbing photographs). If you click on a block of text, you will hear my recording.

I have also made an .mp3 file containing the entire recording.

I invite people to listen to the entire recording, in the hope that the words of hope at the end of the piece will touch their heart.

— Len Fellman

# Lamentation on the Holocaust

*from the book:*

## *The Unconquerable Spirit*

VIGNETTES OF THE JEWISH RELIGIOUS SPIRIT THE NAZIS COULD NOT DESTROY

by Simon Zucker, Zachor Institute 1980

*adapted to be sung with the EICHAH tropes by Len Fellman – July 15, 2007*

He, who remembers those  
who were mindful of Him,  
Each generation and its saintly martyrs—  
since the time Thou has chosen us—  
[May He] remember [the gruesome fate]  
of the last generation.

Woe! What has befallen us!

[All those] [who were swept away]  
by [the flood of blood] —  
[All those] who sacrificed their lives—  
who drowned in the valley of tears,  
May G-d | think of them  
[in the lands of Eternal Life].  
Forever may their memory be a blessing.

‘Lift your hands up to Him’,  
[woe O ye Heavens] !  
woe over the best of Israel’s tribes,  
Communities and congregations,  
towns and districts,  
fraternities, foundations,  
and all the houses of worship.

[I wished streams of water]  
[would pour out of my eyes]  
towards the waterfalls of the river of tears—  
For the millions [of cremated corpses] ,  
consumed in the fires,  
of destruction and horror.

For the princes of Torah,  
[the pillars of Tradition],  
[for the young] flowers of priestly children,  
[For the diligent scholars],  
the teachers [of men and women],  
and the precious youth attending schools,  
The pious daughters, [the old grandparents]  
and their offspring,  
the little infants just born—  
Every one—[thousands upon thousands],  
beloved in life, [whom death did not part].

Search for their blood↗!

Take account of every driven leaf—

Of every life perished↑

in the days of the shoah—

a total of six million↘ dead.

Struck down by lightning↗

that emerged from the furious storm

which devastated a full third↑

of these, your cherished vineyards

that we know Thou did↘ so dearly love.

O Avenger of blood↗! Pray, do not erase

the remembrance of their misery↑

from the book which Thou hast written.

Remember every moan↘,

every horrifying scream,

when they were herded for slaughter↗—

All the rivers of blood,

all the tear-stained faces↑:

they must never be forgotten.

Every horror, every sigh↘, every piercing cry

from those torn asunder↗

by hordes of vicious dogs.

Remember them and count them↑,

bind them into Thy bundle,

Till the day that You avenge↘

their utter degradation.

[Return to the regular Eichah tropes]

In the camp of the barbarian:

pain[and sickness],

the anguish[of mortified souls],

Insults and scoffing, shame and spit—

searing wounds[from merciless beatings]—

Hunger and thirst,[insanity and torture]—

stumbling of the faint

whose strength was gone.

Every death-rattle

of every[single one of them],

perishing[in agony]—

O, far be it from Thee,

that this ever be forgotten.

And the smokestacks—  
 heavy smoke[from the furnaces],  
 Piles and piles of[bones and limbs]—  
 [halls of poison],  
 [The roaring noise from the multitude],  
 suffocating[in the gas chambers]—  
 [The stench of the bodies]—  
 [the emaciated corpses]—  
 fertilizers[for the soil of the frivolous];  
 [And how the tormentors]  
 [turned human fat] into soap  
 And their skin into decorations  
 for their womenfolk.

[“Eichah Chapter 3 melody”—see note below]

Remember the savage leaders  
 pointing their fingers—  
 To the right: slave labor!—  
 to the left: the shadow of death!  
 When the sharpshooters felled the ones,  
 digging their own graves—  
 [repeat 3rd melody:]  
 to be buried still writhing  
 in agony.

And—how they raped our sisters—  
 mutilated our daughters—  
 poisoned medicine from cruel doctors,  
 Fugitives in holes and hide-outs,  
 Their children abandoned  
 in idolatrous homes.

[Return to the regular Eichah tropes]

‘Sheep without blemish—  
 the blood of our captive children, offered  
 upon the mighty altar; woe!  
 It was[Thy loving servant’s lifeless flesh];  
 [Who could]count the saintly flock?  
 May their fire[never go out],  
 For they stood Thy test—  
 [they were] [Sanctifiers of Thy Name].  
 They,[who with the cry]of “*Sh’ma Yisroel!*”  
 gave up their lives for G-d,  
 so that He may gather them in .  
 Until the very last[believing in His justice],  
 singing aloud the song of faith “*Ani ma’amin*”.

[What is left now]: | a people,  
 [bewildered like orphans]—  
 no grave[to pray at]—No tombstones  
 to pour out the tears of our sacred hearts.  
 [Their sacrificial blood] [is their memorial]—  
 the blood[which will forever be boiling],  
 Which[will never be] forgotten;  
 [and the mountains] of ashes  
 from their “Akeidah”,  
 all the ash-piles at the altars,  
 these shall be their lasting tribute.

Who could express[Israel’s torment],  
 its mind[disturbed by misery]—  
 [What’s left of its shine] [reduced to tiny bits];  
 its greatness[sorely crushed today].

O living God! [O merciful One] !  
 Comfort Thy congregation,  
 which yearns[so much for Thee].  
 [Cause a new light] to shine forth,  
 let[rays of glory glow].  
 And may G-d’s sacred spirit,  
 once more rest upon us.

The trope melodies I used were taken from the book CHANTING THE HEBREW BIBLE by Joshua R. Jacobson. In order to adapt the trope symbols to a left-to-right language like English, I reversed the direction of the following trope symbols:

mercha tip’cha munach tevir  
 kadma/pashta gersh gershayim

I also indicate a mercha/tipcha pair or a kadma/geresh pair by “wrapping it around” the phrase which will have the combined melody, as in:

the last generation, ‘Lift your hands up to Him’

I also often indicate an entire English phrase to be chanted to a single trope melody, as in:

[O ye Heavens]

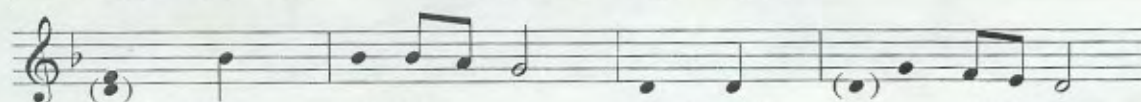
Chapter 3 of Lamentations is sung by singing each set of three verses to three melodies, in turn. The first two of the three melodies end their first half (the “half-cadence”) with a high note, and the third with a “falling tone”. I adopted these melodies for two blocks of the current text (to provide added intensity). I have marked the “half-cadence” syllable with an arrow:

↗ for the high note or half-cadence of the first melody,  
 ↑ for the high note of the second melody, and

↘ for the “falling tone” of the third melody

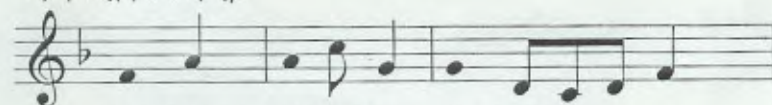
11. Summary of the *Te'amim*

מִרְכָּא טַפְחָא מוֹנַח אֶתְנַחְתָּא      מִרְכָּא טַפְחָא מוֹנַח אֶתְנַחְתָּא



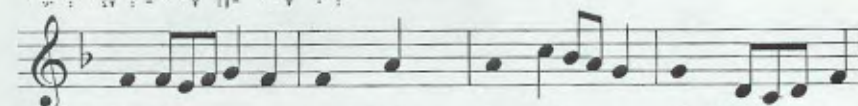
mé - r<sup>e</sup> - KHA    tip - p<sup>e</sup> - ḤA    mé - r<sup>e</sup> - KHA    sí - LUK  
mé - r<sup>e</sup> - KHA    tip - p<sup>e</sup> - ḤA    mu - NAḤ    'et - naḥ - TA

קַדְמָה מִרְכָּא תְּכִיר




kad-MA    mé - r<sup>e</sup> - KHA    t<sup>e</sup> - VIR

תְּלִישָׁה קַדְמָה דַּרְגָּא תְּכִיר



t<sup>e</sup> - lí - SHA    kad-MA    dar-GA    t<sup>e</sup> - VIR

מוֹנַח מִרְכָּא תְּכִיר




MU-naḥ    mé - r<sup>e</sup> - KHA    t<sup>e</sup> - VIR

זָקַר גָּדוֹל



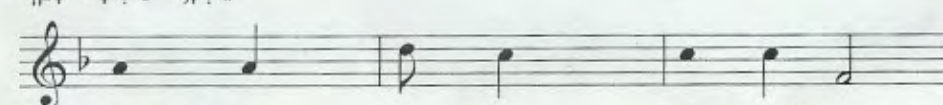
za    -    KÉF

יְתִיב מוֹנַח זָקַר



TÍV    mu - NAḤ    za - KÉF

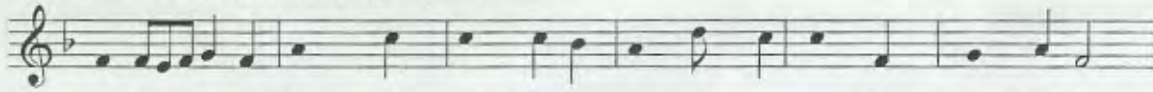
מִרְכָּא פִּשְׁטָא זָקַר



mé - r<sup>e</sup> - KHA    TA    za - KÉF

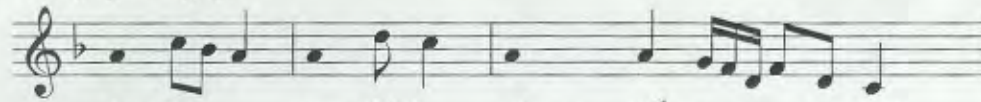


תְּלִישָׁה קְדָמָה מְהַפֵּךְ פֶּשֶׁטֶל מוֹנֵחַ זָקָר

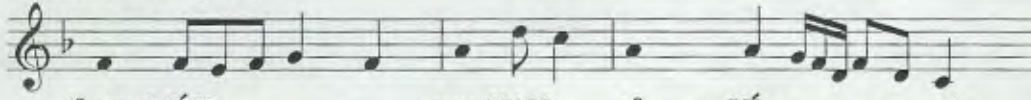
t<sup>e</sup>-lí-SHA \_\_\_\_ kad - MA mah-PAKH\_ pash-TA \_\_\_\_ mu - NAḤ za - KÉF\_מוֹנֵחַ זָרְקָא מוֹנֵחַ סְגוֹל<sup>a</sup>

mu-NAḤ zar-KA \_\_\_\_ mu - NAḤ se - GÓL\_

דָּרְגָא מוֹנֵחַ רְבִיעַ

dar-GA \_\_\_\_ mu - NAḤ\_ r<sup>e</sup> - VÍ - - - - a'

לְנֶרְמָה מוֹנֵחַ רְבִיעַ

l<sup>e</sup>-gar-MÉH \_\_\_\_ mu-NAḤ\_ r<sup>e</sup> - VÍ - - - - a'

תְּלִישָׁה קְדָמָה זָרֵשׁ

t<sup>e</sup> - lí - SHA \_\_\_\_ kad - MA \_\_\_\_ (v<sup>e</sup>) - GE - - resh

מוֹנֵחַ זָרְשִׁים

MU-naḥ gé-r<sup>e</sup> - sha-YIM \_\_\_\_

מוֹנֵחַ תְּלִישָׁה

mu - NAḤ \_\_\_\_ t<sup>e</sup> - lí - SHA \_\_\_\_

## The Final Cadence

We use a special melody to signal the ending of each chapter of Lamentations. This melody is applied at the final (*merekha*-) *tippeḥa* segment. You'll chant this cadence slowly. This special cadence is not applied to chapter three, which is chanted to a completely different melody (see p. 107).

מֶרְכָּא טִפְּחָא מֶרְכָּא סִלּוּק

mé-r<sup>e</sup> - KHA tip-p<sup>e</sup> - HA mé-r<sup>e</sup> - KHA sí - LUK



## Chanting Chapter Three

The third chapter of Lamentations, consisting of 66 short verses, is not cantillated according to the *te'amim*. Instead, it is chanted to a special melody that combines every three verses into one strophe of melody. The half-cadence of each line of the strophe (indicated by the first fermata of each line) is chanted on the first word marked with *zakef* (or, if there is no *zakef*, *tippeha*).

Hear the chanting of chapter three on CD track 87.

1. 'a-NÍ hag-GE-ver ra-'A 'o - NÍ be - SHÉ - vet 'ev-ra - TÓ  
4. bil-LA ve-sa-RÍ ve-'ó - RÍ shib - BAR 'ats-mó - TAY

2. 'ó-TÍ na-HAG vay-yó - LAKH HÓ-shekh ve - ló - 'ÓR  
5. ba-NA 'a-LAY vay-yak - KAF RÓSH ut - la - 'A

3. 'AKH BÍ ya-SHUV ya-ha-FÓKH ya - DÓ kol-hay - YÓM  
6. be-ma-ḥa-shak-KÍM hó-shí - VA - ní ke-mé-TÉ 'ó - LAM

(3:1) אֲנִי הַגִּבֵּר רָאָה עָלַי בְּשֹׁכֶט עֶבְרָתוֹ:

(3:2) אֲוֹתַי נָתַג וַיִּלָּךְ תִּשְׁקֹךְ וְלֹא-אֲזֹר:

(3:3) אֲנִי בִי יֵשֶׁב יִהְיֶה יָדוֹ כָּל-הַיּוֹם:

(3:4) בָּלָה בְּשָׂרִי וְעוֹדִי שֹׁכֵר עֲצָמוֹתַי:

(3:5) בָּגָה עָלַי נִיָּקָה רֹאשׁ וּתְלָאָה:

(3:6) בְּמַחְשָׁבִים הוֹשִׁיבָנִי כְּמַתִּי עוֹלָם:

## Len Fellman's English readings with tropes

The purpose of this project is to translate *THE SONG OF THE TORAH* into English.

I work by comparing as many as ten English translations of a *pasuk* and creating a cantillated English sentence that sounds as much as possible like the Hebrew. They follow the Hebrew as closely as possible, word for word and trope by trope. The English language has an amazing flexibility, making it possible to make the English word order match that of the Hebrew quite well, allowing for some “poetic licence”, and some willingness on the part of the listener to be “carried” by the melody more than by the English syntax. The translation needs to sound good when *chanted*, but not necessarily when *spoken or read*.

Unlike most translations, these “transtropilations” are not intended to be a substitute for the Hebrew. On the contrary, they are meant to provide a “window” into the Hebrew text and its musical expression. My ideal listener knows enough Hebrew and has enough interest to follow the Hebrew in a bilingual text while the *leyner* is chanting the English version, to bring the Hebrew text to life, both *verbally* and *musically*. For this purpose I use *exactly* the same tropes in the English as in the Hebrew (almost always on the corresponding English word).

If one examines the authoritative translations, it becomes clear that there are many passages of whose meaning the experts are unsure or disagree with each other. In those situations I attempt to choose a reading which scans well with the melody, and which agrees with at least one of the authoritative renderings. I also pay attention what the commentaries have to say. I favor literal translations (e.g. “cut a covenant”) to call attention to Hebrew idioms, and towards simpler (even if less accurate) words (e.g. Ex. 12:7 “beam above the door” rather than “lintel”) to be easier to follow. If my readings provoke a discussion of the Hebrew, I consider that as justification for using less-than-idiomatic English. I try to find just the right balance between “literalness” and “listenable-ness”. A primary goal is throwing light on the Hebrew syntax.

In order to adapt the trope symbols to a left-to-right language like English, I *reversed* the direction of the trope symbols:

mercha tipcha munach tevir mapakh *or* yetiv kadma *or* pashta geresht gershayim telisha katana telisha gedola

(Generally speaking the *conjunctive tropes* such as mercha, munach, mapakh, kadma, and telisha katana “lean toward” the words they “conjoin” to, while the *disjunctive tropes* such as tipcha, geresht, gershayim, and telisha gedola “lean away” from the words that follow, so as to create a sense of separation.)

The trope symbol is normally placed under the accented syllable, unless it is a *pre-positive* accent (telisha gedola, placed *at the beginning* of the word or phrase) or a *post-positive* one (telisha katana or pashta, placed at the *end* of the word or phrase).

The Hebrew text frequently puts a *makkeph* (which is like a hyphen) between words in order to treat them as a single word to be chanted. I use a different system for English: If an entire English phrase is to be chanted to a single trope melody, I place it between grey brackets, as in this phrase from the Book of Lamentations:

[clings to her skirts]

The *leyner* is invited to fit this phrase to the *Eicha* “rivi’i” melody in whatever way seems most natural.

As a variant of the “grey bracket” device, I indicate the following pairs of tropes by “wrapping them around” the phrase which will have the combined melody:

mercha/tipcha	kadma/geresh ( <i>or</i> : azla, etc.)	mercha siluk
(Renew our days)	(She weeps bitterly)	(a fire-offering to God)

Again, the *leyner* should decide on the most natural way to fit the phrase to the combined trope melody.

I put words in gray which I consider essential but which don’t strictly match the Hebrew. I also “pad” some phrases with extra words in gray to fill out a musical phrase nicely. Different trope systems vary widely in the length of the musical phrase used, so the words in gray may or not be used depending on the *leyner*’s cantillation system. In particular, the tropes *telisha g’dola* (ק), *legarmeh*, *metigah-zakef*, and *pazer* vary widely in the musical phrases used for chanting. (And please indulge me in my whimsical treatments of *shalsholet*.)

“*Metigah-zakef*” is a special trope combination which can be recognized by a kadma and a zakef katon appearing on the same Hebrew word (again, a *makkeph* makes two words into one). (There are several examples in Genesis 18 & 19, beginning with 18:16). I indicate this by placing the corresponding English phrase in grey brackets:

[Take heed—take care for yourself]

In some trope systems (notably cantor Moshe Haschel in “Navigating the Bible II”) this is given a very distinctive melody—for which purpose extra syllables fill out the musical phrase (as in “take care” in this example). Haschel’s system also chants the trope *munach* as *legarmeh* more often than other systems do.

I don’t write a single word of translation without first hearing the melody of the phrase in my mind, following one of two trope systems: The one by Portnoy and Wolff (*The Art of Cantillation*) and the one by Joshua R. Jacobson (*Chanting the Hebrew Bible*).

Normally I transcribe the name יהוה as YHWH (in small caps), so the *leyner* can choose how to pronounce it in English (depending in part on the musical phrase). I usually chant it as *yud-hey-vav-hey*, but occasionally as “*God*” or “*Adonai*”.

*The English translations I mostly use (besides several scholarly commentaries) are the following:*

Aryeh Kaplan, ‘The Living Torah’ (also my source for proper names & transliterations)

Richard Elliott Friedman, ‘The Bible With Sources Revealed’

Everett Fox, ‘The Five Books of Moses’

The Stone Edition ‘Tanach’

JPS ‘Hebrew-English Tanach’, (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. 2000), *along with* Orlinsky ‘Notes on the New Translation of the Torah’

Robert Alter, ‘The Five Books of Moses’

The Jerusalem Bible (1966) (also my source for topic headings)

The New King James Bible

*For Megillot, I also use* H.L. Ginsberg, ‘The Five Megillot and Jonah’